

**Borough of West Reading
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

July 9, 2018

Committee Members Present

Phil Wert, Nick Imbesi, Andrew Kearney, Christin Kelley, John Woodward, Ben LaManna, Dean Rohrbach, Cathy Hoffman

Committee Members Absent

Robin Horman, Aaron Gantz

Visitors Present

None

Call to Order

Mr. Wert called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Approval of the Minutes

Moved by Nick Imbesi and seconded by John Woodward to approve the minutes of June 11, 2018.

Motion carried.

Foreclosed & Blighted Residential Properties Update:

311 Spruce – A concern was raised about the condition of the building with a potential roof breach that may be causing considerable damage. Staff will see if an administrative warrant can be obtained to gain entry into the building to assess for damage.

- **Residential Property Sales and Rental Report**

Mr. Rohrbach provided a list of the properties sold from May 27th to July 8th as listed in the local newspaper as well as advertised rental properties. A spreadsheet of these sales and rentals will be created in order to track transactions for future reference.

BID Status Update

Mr. Wert reported that the PDC is preparing the final version of the BID, with everyone involved eager to move forward. The next step will be review by the Steering Committee with subsequent review by the CRF. Once those reviews have been completed, a public meeting will be the final step in the process.

Significant/Vacant West Reading Commercial Properties Update:

- Narrow Fabrics Building – According to the developer, more than half of the residential units having been leased and work continues on the remaining spaces.
- VF Building – Construction continues with nothing of significance to report at this time.
- 301 Penn – No update currently available.
- 445, 447 and 449 Penn – No further discussion at this point.

- 707 Penn – No update at this time.
- 711 Penn – The property has been sold by private sale for \$235,000.
- 501 Penn – The project is in the final stage with land development.
- 166 Franklin – The property continues to be vacant.
- 23 S. 6th – Fandangled has left the premises and the property is available for rent.

Strategic Planning Discussion

A five year economic development plan was discussed. The larger future projects that are just ideas at this point need to be broken down into specific short-term actions and plans that can be completed over time and bring the overall project to fruition. Ms. Kelley recommended that the Committee commit the next meeting to focusing on the metrics of the plans. The discussion ensued with the necessity of strategic partnerships being formed with existing stakeholders in the community.

Old & New Business

- Buttonwood Street/Circle Enhancements – The engineer will be consulted for updated costs for the project.
- Joint Comp Plan – The process is almost complete.
- Railroad Bridge – Architect Michael Kautter will be contacted for preliminary costs to design a new sign. Mr. Woodward will reach out to him. It was suggested that community sponsors be obtained for the project.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Hoffman